



June 23, 2020

The Honorable Kim Reynolds
Governor of Iowa
1007 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50319

Via email: Kim.Reynolds@iowa.gov and Kirby.Connell@iowa.gov.

Dear Governor Reynolds;

Iowa Workforce Development's recent announcement to partner with Coursera for free access to training and educational courses through December 30, 2020 raises concerns for the state Board of Regents institutions, Iowa's Community Colleges, and Iowa's independent colleges and universities. There is a myriad of free and low-cost opportunities available to Iowans today that are designed to meet the needs of local employers and would be more effective options and better suited to helping Iowans facing unemployment today.

The Coursera partnership, as we understand it, does not align with the objectives of Future Ready Iowa. Instead of tightly focusing training opportunities on high-demand job areas critical to our economy, it is completely unbounded from Iowa employers' needs. In fact, opportunities such as this may divert students from pursuing the last-dollar scholarship or grant programs. Further, the Iowa College Student Aid Commission has indicated the partnership may be inconsistent with state law relating to state authorization for postsecondary programs from international or out-of-state providers. We must ensure all postsecondary providers are expected to follow the processes that are in place.

As each of our institutions has clearly demonstrated, we share the goals of your administration to ensure Iowans have access to high quality education and training, particularly through Future Ready Iowa. Each of our institutions has, and continues, to provide access to such education and training for hundreds of thousands of Iowans annually.

Unfortunately, there was no prior communication about this partnership from Iowa Workforce Development to our Iowa-based institutions about providing similar opportunities. We ask you to encourage Director Townsend to re-engage with Iowa's higher education community to identify partnership opportunities to accomplish your administration's objectives.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Mark Braun, written in a cursive style.

Mark Braun
Board of Regents

A blue ink signature of M.J. Dolan, written in a cursive style.

M.J. Dolan
IACCT

A blue ink signature of Gary Steinke, written in a cursive style.

Gary Steinke
Iowa Assoc. of Independent
Colleges and Universities

CC: Sara Craig, Chief of Staff
Beth Townsend, Director, Iowa Workforce Development